

Administrative Order



Administrative Order No.: 7-8

Title: Employee Suggestion Program

Ordered: 09/20/06

Effective: 10/01/06

AUTHORITY:

Section 4.02 of the Miami-Dade County Home Rule Amendment and Charter and Section 2-28 of the Code of Miami-Dade County.

SUPERSEDES:

This Administrative Order supersedes Administrative Order 7-8, ordered October 22, 2002 and effective November 1, 2002.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Employee Suggestion Program (ESP) is to motivate Miami-Dade County employees and departments to share ideas to: improve the productivity, efficiency, effectiveness, safety, and quality of government services; stimulate morale; and recognize employees whose suggestions and innovations result in either monetary savings, increased revenues to the County, improved quality of services, or otherwise benefit Miami-Dade County and its residents. The ESP complements other employee recognition and award programs, including gainsharing and other financial rewards initiatives.

DEFINITIONS:

Suggestion -- a voluntary, written, original idea or innovative application proposed by an individual employee, a group of employees, or a team of Miami-Dade County employees that clearly identifies a specific problem and suggests a specific method or improvement: to do any job or procedure better, quicker, easier, safer, or at less cost; to increase productivity; to improve the quality of work life; to enhance the County's public image; or to otherwise benefit Miami-Dade County in the judgment of the Employee Suggestion Committee. Suggestions submitted to an Employee Participation Program (EPP) by employees may also be submitted to ESP.

If an individual employee or a group or team of employees submits a suggestion to ESP and the suggestion is eligible for award through a gainsharing initiative in a departmental Employee Participation Program, the employee(s) can only receive one of the two cash awards. The award can be the higher of the two options. Only those suggestions that receive the ESP Special Award can be considered for the ESP Manager's Grand Award.

Employee Participation Program (EPP) – The EPP is a formal business improvement process fostering a mutually supportive management, union and employee working relationship to improve operations through effective employee participation. Employees submit voluntary suggestions for improvement to their department EPP program individually and in teams or groups. These suggestions are recorded in a department database and then reviewed. As appropriate, suggestions are implemented.

Gainsharing – an incentive program that includes financial rewards to employees for exceeding specific performance goals, which generate substantial savings for the County through better use of labor, materials, capital and energy.

ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS:

A Miami-Dade County employee, a group of employees, or a team of County employees may receive an award for specific suggestions that are exemplary and produce positive results for the County.

Employees below the level of division director, or equivalent rank/position as determined by the Employee Suggestion Committee, shall be eligible for Recognition and Special Awards. Those not eligible for Recognition and Special Awards shall be eligible for Innovator Awards.

Members of the Employee Suggestion Committee, ESP staff, and the County Manager's staff, including the Office of Strategic Business Management (OSBM) and Audit and Management Services (AMS), are not eligible for Recognition and Special Awards.

Employees appointed as ESP Departmental Coordinators or EPP Coordinators are not eligible to submit suggestions to ESP while they are serving in that capacity.

To be eligible for a Recognition or Special Award the recognized employee's, group's, or team's efforts must be above and beyond the recognized employee(s)' responsibilities as defined in the employee(s)' job description, or by typically assigned / performed duties. If an employee has authority to implement the suggestion without consulting a higher authority it is within their normal duties.

AWARD CATAGORIES:

1. **Recognition Award** - The Recognition Award is given to individuals, groups, or teams for those suggestions selected for a trial implementation. The suggester(s) receive eight (8) hours of administrative leave and a Recognition Award Certificate.
2. **Special Award** - The Special Award is presented for those suggestions successfully implemented and approved by Department Directors. There are two types of Special Awards:
 - a. **Intangible** - a suggestion for which a precise monetary value cannot be determined, including: more efficient and/or effective management of operations, improvements in employee morale, health, safety, and quality of work life; and improved quality of service to Miami-Dade County residents. The Intangible net awards shall range from \$50 to a maximum of \$1,000. The amount of cash awarded for Intangible Suggestions is determined by factors such as the seriousness, frequency, and extent of the problem, and the creativity and effectiveness of the solution.
 - b. **Tangible** - a suggestion whose value can be precisely determined and demonstrates monetary savings or increases in revenue. Tangible net awards shall range from \$50 to a maximum of \$5,000 per suggestion, up to 10% of the estimated net monetary savings or increase in revenue of the first

full year of implementation and approved by the Department Director. The cost of capital expenditures shall be amortized over the useful life of the equipment or facility. Direct labor costs and indirect or administrative costs of implementation shall be considered first year costs.

All net savings or revenue increases that result from an implemented suggestion should be accurately recorded and appropriately documented. Each department will be required to present the documentation at their annual budget hearing with the Director of the Office of Strategic Business Management.

The costs of Special Awards shall be funded from the budget(s) of the department(s) that benefit from the suggestion. All Special Awards shall be issued to the suggester in the form of a County check in the net amount awarded.

3. **Manager's Grand Award** – The Manager's Grand Award is given at the end of the fiscal year for the most outstanding Special Award suggestion. The County Manager shall select the winner from the Employee Suggestion Committee's recommendations. The County Manager will determine the amount of the Grand Award and will determine the runner up and other awards presented.
4. **Innovator Award** – The Innovator Award is a special recognition award given for exceptional solutions to problems that may fall within the individual's job assignment. Management staff and personnel ineligible for a Recognition or Special Award are eligible for the Innovator Award. Nominations are submitted by Department Directors or the management staff of the County Manager's Office to the Employee Suggestion Committee for review at any time. The County Manager shall make the final decision and determine the type of recognition award based upon the Employee Suggestion Committee's recommendation, which may include cash, administrative leave, and/ or non-monetary recognition.
5. **Bravo Award** – This award recognizes a group assigned to develop or implement a suggestion, solve a problem, or create a process. Department Directors can nominate the group for this award to the Director of the Office of Employee Recognition after they have successfully completed their assignment in an exemplary manner. A Bravo Award consists of \$500. The award amount is equally divided among the group members. The County Manager can deny a Bravo Award recommendation.

The total dollar amount paid out to employees for a particular suggestion, solution or assignment in a single program year, under both ESP and other financial rewards programs, such as gainsharing initiatives, and inclusive of all recipients, shall not exceed the maximum award amount allowed under the ESP or the maximum award amount allowed under the alternate reward program, whichever is greater.

Individual employees cannot be compensated twice for the same suggestion, solution or assignment through two different initiatives. The awardee(s) shall receive either the ESP or the alternate program award, whichever is greater. It shall be incumbent upon the respective Department Director to develop an accounting method to ensure adherence to these award limits.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Department Directors

Department Directors will develop a process within their department to accept, review, and potentially implement ESP suggestions as follows:

- a. Create a Department Suggestion Review Committee (DSRC), or a series of review groups, if department size warrants, to evaluate suggestions. The DSRC or panel may be comprised of representation from the department divisions, within a division, or whatever composition the Department Director decides will assure a fair review and an environment conducive to employee participation and support of business improvement practices.
- b. Appoint a Departmental Coordinator to guide the work of the DSRC
- c. Resolve conflicts regarding the submission of suggestions.
- d. Review and approve Recognition Awards and Special Awards for suggestions implemented in their department.
- e. Ensure assignment of implementation responsibilities.
- f. Determine if award recommendations and evaluations are adequate (clear, accurate, objective, and complete).
- g. Recommend award amounts for implemented suggestions in accordance with ESP Guidelines.
- h. Forward recommendations to the Employee Recognition and Suggestion Manager in the Employee Relations Department (ERD) for processing, award payment, and award presentation.
- i. Review requests for reconsideration of award decisions and notify the Employee Recognition and Suggestion Manager of their decision within sixty (60) days.
- j. Participate in Special Award, Manager's Grand Award, and other ESP award ceremonies as needed.

2. Departmental Coordinator

Each Department Director shall appoint a senior staff representative to serve as the ESP Departmental Coordinator. The major responsibilities of the Coordinator include:

- a. Receive ESP suggestions from the Employee Recognition and Suggestion Manager.
- b. Assign suggestions to the DSRC for review and evaluation.
- c. Monitor the suggestion review and evaluation process.

- d. Provide feedback to contributors and to ESP.
- e. Log suggestions into departmental database.
- f. Coordinate and track the in-house evaluation process for their department.
- g. Review and submit departmental evaluations to the Employee Recognition and Suggestion Manager after obtaining Department Director's sign-off.
- h. Promote and market ESP within respective department.
- i. Designate staff as may be required to support and facilitate ESP activities.
- j. Work closely with DSRC to assure timely evaluation, implementation, and measurement of suggestion results.
- k. Serve on the Manager's Grand Award Screening Panel, on a rotating basis, as determined by the Employee Recognition and Suggestion Manager.

3. Department Suggestion Review Committee (DSRC)

Department Directors will assign a group or a series of groups, if department size warrants it, within their department to evaluate ESP suggestions. The DSRC or panel shall be comprised of representatives the Department Director determines will assure a fair review and an environment conducive to employee participation. The DSRC will work closely with the finance officer, the budget department liaison, and the departmental personnel officer for accurate evaluation and tracking of cost savings and revenue. The DSRC shall:

- a. Evaluate suggestions for efficiency, cost savings, quality of life, or service improvements.
- b. Track all suggestions submitted to the department through ESP.
- c. Establish or review performance measures by which efficiencies or cost savings will be assessed.
- d. Propose or approve a timetable or tentative schedule for implementation and assessment of promising suggestions.
- e. Establish a schedule for monitoring and measuring suggestion implementation.
- f. Assure timely evaluation, implementation, and measurement of suggestion results.

4. Employee Suggestion Committee

The County Manager shall appoint a Committee to: set program policy; define and clarify ESP rules and procedures; recommend nominees for the Manager's Grand Award and Innovator Award; and make final recommendations regarding special circumstances of eligibility, evaluation, or award calculation.

The Committee shall meet at least once quarterly. The Committee shall have nine (9) voting members appointed by the County Manager, including:

- Five directors of operating departments or designees (appointments rotated each fiscal year)
- Director of the Employee Relations Department or designee
- Director of Audit and Management Services or designee
- Director of the Office of Strategic Business Management or designee
- County Manager or designee

5. Manager's Grand Award Screening Panel

Each year, a group comprised of Department Coordinators is assembled by the Employee Recognition and Suggestion Manager on a rotating basis to review all Special Awards and to rank them for the Employee Suggestion Committee's review and selection of the Manager's Grand Award winner.

6. Employee Recognition and Suggestion Manager

The Employee Recognition and Suggestion Manager is a representative of the Employee Relations Department whose primary responsibilities are to:

- a. Develop and maintain overall program operations.
- b. Design program operating procedures and recommend policy changes.
- c. Develop a marketing plan and conduct an employee outreach program
- d. Train ESP Departmental Coordinators and DSRCs.
- e. Provide staff assistance to the Employee Suggestion Committee.
- f. Provide technical assistance to departments upon request.
- g. Receive employee suggestions, review them for completeness and compliance with ESP guidelines, and assign them to County departments for evaluation.
- h. Track all suggestions and coordinate processing with Departmental Coordinators.
- i. Process suggestions approved by Department Directors for payment and presentations.
- j. Encourage the application of successfully implemented suggestions to other relevant departments.

- k. Conduct follow-up monitoring of implemented suggestions as needed.
- l. Plan and prepare all facets of Special Award, Manager's Grand Award, and other employee award ceremonies as required.
- m. Prepare annual report to the County Manager and other ESP departmental status reports as needed.
- n. Design and implement additional employee recognition opportunities as needed to improve morale and increase department participation.

7. Employee Relations Department Director

The Employee Relations Department will administer the Employee Suggestion Program. The Director of the Employee Relations Department shall be responsible for ensuring department compliance with the ESP guidelines. Utilizing reports and other monitoring mechanisms the Director will also periodically communicate the status of departmental performance to the Employee Suggestion Committee and the County Manager.

PROGRAM RULES:

1. All written suggestions shall be accepted for review. Oral suggestions shall not be accepted, but requests from the suggester(s) for technical assistance to complete the suggestion form shall be honored.
2. A suggestion that does not offer a specific solution may not be accepted for evaluation. The suggestion may be returned to the submitter for a complete solution.
3. If the suggestion is not accepted for either a trial or final implementation, it is not eligible for an award.
4. The following suggestion subjects shall not be eligible for award consideration:
 - a. Personal and personnel grievances
 - b. Adjustments in job classifications, benefits, or salaries
 - c. Matters within the scope of collective bargaining
 - d. Matters requiring legislative or court action other than by County ordinance
 - e. Stricter enforcement of already existing rules, regulations, or Ordinances within the County Code
 - f. Routine corrections or updates to printed material and hard copy or other form
 - g. Periodic or routine matters for which established procedures are provided such as:
 - Housekeeping (loose or frayed carpeting).

- Normal maintenance and repairs (a missing or damaged “stop” sign or malfunctioning traffic Signal) unless an improved method is proposed.
 - Adherence to prescribed safety practices.
 - Requisition or purchase of commonly used items (obtained from local stock, purchased locally or available through General Services Administration).
 - Ideas on subjects periodically re-examined by management
- h. Increases in existing fees or charges
- i. An idea awarded cash under a previous suggestion, is not eligible for another cash award for a similar application of the idea.-
5. Any eligible employee whose suggestion is implemented shall not lose their eligibility for any monetary award by reason of termination, resignation, retirement, promotion, or transfer. In the event of the suggester's death, the award shall be paid to the employee's estate or beneficiary. In the case of a terminated employee, the County Manager will review the circumstances and determine if the award can be presented.
 6. Special Awards and Bravo Awards shall be split equally among eligible co-signees of a suggestion if more than one individual submits the suggestion. In no event will the net award per co-signees be less than \$25. The limit on the number of co-signees is eight (8).
 7. Suggestions relating to the content of a County Memorandum of Agreement, Memorandum of Understanding, Board of County Commissioners Resolution, Department Performance Agreement, contract, current process, problem solving process or the work of a group created under the Employee Participation Program guidelines may be delayed for consideration until the agreement, contract, or study is completed.
 8. If a department modifies an employee's suggestion so that the specific solution adopted is in a different form, the employee may be eligible for an award if the employee's suggestion is considered to be of substantial assistance and was directly responsible for management taking action. If the final adopted suggestion does not allow for the quantifiable identification of the employee's contribution, then the suggestion may be judged as an Intangible Special Award.
 9. Suggestions which involve patentable inventions shall be eligible for awards. If a suggestion involves patent rights, the County's Administrative Order 7-12 on the County Policy Regarding Employee Patent Rights shall determine the employee's and County's position.
 10. New or newly-modified or designed equipment (that part that is exclusively new), systems, procedures or forms shall not be open to suggestions for the first ninety (90) days of actual use, or the warranty period, if applicable, of the equipment or system. Consideration of the suggestion shall be delayed until the 90-day use period or warranty period expires, whichever is longer.

11. The Employee Suggestion Committee shall determine the eligibility of employees and suggestions. Their decision shall be final and binding and not subject to review by any other official or tribunal.
12. If a suggestion is not awarded, the same or similar suggestion is not eligible to be resubmitted by any suggester for a two (2) year period after the suggestion is closed. After two (2) years the suggestion is again eligible for submission by any suggester.

AWARD PROCESS:

1. Suggestion Submittal Form:

Suggestions must be submitted on the Employee Suggestion Form or using MetroNet or the Internet. The suggestion form should be forwarded directly by the employee to the Employee Recognition and Suggestion Manager at the Employee Relations Department. All suggestions shall be acknowledged. Participants in department EPPs may submit their suggestions to both their department EPP Program and to the Employee Suggestion Program.

Upon request, the identity of a suggester shall not be revealed by the Employee Recognition and Suggestion Manager except for award purposes and, in special cases, for the sake of clarifying eligibility.

2. Departmental Evaluation:

The Employee Recognition and Suggestion Manager shall forward eligible suggestions to the ESP Departmental Coordinator in the appropriate department(s) for evaluation. The Coordinator will assign suggestions to the DSRC for evaluation and ensure that all suggestions are logged into the database.

The DSRC will review the suggestions, evaluate their potential effectiveness, and track cost savings and revenue. The DSRC will send its recommendations for implementation and its evaluation of any subsequent savings to the Department Director through the ESP Department Coordinator. The Department Director will make award decisions and sign-off on actual savings.

The ESP Departmental Coordinator will monitor the departmental review process to assure timely evaluation, implementation, and measurement of suggestions. The ESP Departmental Coordinator will make certain that suggesters and the Employee Recognition and Suggestion Manager receive appropriate feedback regarding suggestions.

Initial department evaluations shall be completed within 60 sixty calendar days after receipt, using the Evaluation Form provided by the Employee Recognition and Suggestion Manager. The departmental evaluation shall be signed by the Departmental Director or Deputy Department Director before it is returned to the Employee Recognition and Suggestion Manager for processing. The Department Director's recommendation shall be used as a basis to authorize awards.

3. Department Implementation:

Suggestions approved for implementation will be monitored and the results will be measured. The department director will recommend Special Award amounts for implemented suggestions and will forward recommendations to the Employee Recognition and Suggestion Manager for review and processing.

4. Employee Recognition and Suggestion Manager Review:

Upon receipt of the departmental evaluation, the Employee Recognition and Suggestion Manager shall review the evaluation for completeness and accuracy. The Manager may request additional information from the evaluating Department as needed.

A Recognition Award shall be given to the suggester if both the departmental evaluation and the Employee Recognition and Suggestion Manager's recommendation support a trial implementation. If neither recommendation supports a trial implementation, the Recognition Award shall be denied. If the recommendations differ, the matter shall be submitted to the Employee Suggestion Committee for award determination.

5. Special Award Approval Process:

Special Awards will be approved by Department Directors based on ESP guidelines. The Employee Recognition and Suggestion Manager will process approved awards for payment and submit quarterly reports to the Employee Suggestion Committee detailing suggestions received, approved, and pending.

6. Re-evaluations:

If a suggestion is rejected, an employee may request that the Employee Recognition and Suggestion Manager reconsider the decision by submitting additional information to support the request within two (2) years of the notification date. The Employee Recognition and Suggestion Manager will review the new information and submit it for re-evaluation, if appropriate, to the department director and the DSRC. An employee has the right to request a final review by the Employee Suggestion Committee. The Employee Suggestion Committee will render a decision concerning the suggestion as necessary. The Employee Suggestion Committee's decision—on reconsiderations shall be final and binding and not subject to review by any other official or tribunal.

An employee may also request, in writing, that their suggestion be reconsidered for award purposes if the suggestion is put into effect within two (2) years of the date the idea was rejected and closed by a department.

7. Manager's Grand Award Selection Process:

The Employee Recognition and Suggestion Manager shall convene the ESP Manager's Grand Award Screening Panel annually. Comprised of Department Coordinators that rotate annually, the Panel will review all the Special Awards made during the year and rate their impact on Miami-Dade County. After interviewing at least the top ten suggestions in both the tangible and intangible categories, the Panel will complete a second rating process. The top rated suggestions in each category are then referred to the ESP Committee for consideration of the ESP Manager's Grand Award.

The ESP Committee shall review the finalist tangible and intangible suggestions and recommend the winner and runner-ups to the County Manager. The County Manager will select the Grand Award winner(s) and will determine the amount of the award each year.

8. Award Acknowledgment

A Certificate of Award shall be issued to the suggester acknowledging the award category, the award, and the suggestion. The department shall record a recognition statement in the suggester's next employee performance evaluation acknowledging the receipt of the award and describing the suggestion.

REVIEW:

Every year the Director of the Employee Relations Department shall review the Employee Suggestion Program operation and issue a report to the County Manager. The report shall include the number, types and sources of suggestions received, efficiency of the review and implementation process, savings and intangible benefits realized, and may include recommendations for adjustments or revisions to the Program.

This Administrative Order is hereby submitted to the Board of County Commissioners of Miami-Dade County, Florida.

County Manager